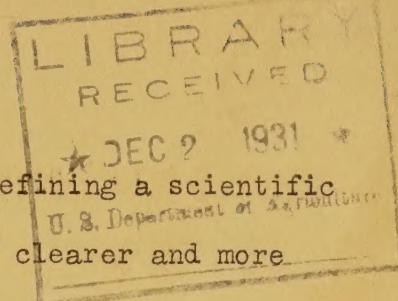


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1.9
EX 6 Fo

FORMULATION OF RESEARCH PROJECTS 1/



The project outline as a means of formulating and defining a scientific inquiry has come into general use. It is an evidence of clearer and more deliberate planning and of more systematic, ordered effort.

The Committee on Experiment Station Organization and Policy, in its report for 1927, made certain pertinent suggestions and recommendations regarding the formulation of projects, and there have been many indications of interest and use of the suggestions made at that time. There are still many inquiries each year, however, regarding formulation of projects so as to simplify and expedite review and approval. Your committee, therefore, submits the following statement based upon the report of the Committee in 1927 and experience of the Office of Experiment Stations in handling projects since that time.

The Committee report of 1927 made the following suggestions:

"Whatever the method of procedure the leader of the proposed project should assume responsibility for knowledge and analysis of previous investigation, or investigations under way, which may have a bearing on the research proposed by him. In like manner he should be prepared to support his proposed methods of investigation as adequate for accomplishment in the research proposed, and feasible of being carried out with the facilities and equipment which may be made available.

"After thorough consideration of these matters, the next important task is to formulate a project statement which pictures for administrative officers, other investigators, and coworkers the merits of the project, its objective, procedure in the proposed investigation as to technique and methods, the probable period of time and its reasonableness, and the funds required and their adequacy for the proposed work."

The more specific recommendations of the committee were as follows:

"The title.---This should characterize the concrete, limited unit of work to be undertaken and not cover the entire field to which the project is related.

"The objective.---It should be clear-cut and specific, and not involved with statements of procedure.

1/ A section of the report of the Committee on Station Organization and Policy, presented at the Chicago meeting of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, in November, 1931, and mimeographed and distributed by request of the Subsection on Experiment Station Work of the Association.

"The outlook.---The project should be constructive in character. It should take account of the status of the question, attack points which need further study, supplement other work, exhibit vision and ingenuity, and give prospect of success.

"What, specifically, is it proposed to add to the sum of knowledge of the subject? Such a contribution may deal with some new point, or those still in doubt, or determine applications to the conditions in the region.

"The procedure.---It should be up to date, representing the progress and current views on methods and technique. It should give data that will stand statistical analysis and be comparable with other similar accepted data. Does it cover the requirements of the subject, or is it one-sided or inadequate in some respects?

"Thoroughness.---The project should be designed to undertake thoroughly and with reasonable completeness the investigation of the subject and should not be fragmentary and superficial.

"Probable duration.---Is the time element a reasonable one? Does the project commit the station to a course it may not be desirable to carry through?

"The funds required.---Is the estimate ample for the proposed investigation? Are the expenses and other essentials within the means of the station budget?"

While the project outline is not a thing to be standardized, it may properly be expected to conform to certain essentials which experience and good usage have disclosed. The minimum of such essentials for an acceptable project outline are in brief as follows:

- (1) A clear-cut specific title, accurately characterizing the work to be undertaken.
- (2) The leaders and cooperators in the project.
- (3) Clearly defined objectives.
- (4) An explicit statement of procedure to be followed.
- (5) Evidence of familiarity with work of others on the subject.
- (6) Allotment of funds.

The precise and complete form and content of a project outline applicable to all cases would be difficult to prescribe, but adequate and definite information on points 1 to 6 enumerated is essential in passing judgment on projects submitted for approval. It is believed that the handling of projects by the Office of Experiment Stations as well as by station directors would be simplified and expedited if these requirements and suggestions are consistently adhered to in formulating the project outline.

